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WATERPROOFING OF CLOTH, SILK, &c.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—I would feel happy should the few remarks I will at present offer be found worthy of insertion in your columns—it is on the subject of waterproofing cloth, or other fabrics, cotton, silk, leather, &c.

When the matter first came before the public, being determined if possible to ascertain the secret, after many unsuccessful experiments I found all the requisite properties to consist in a concentrated solution of acetate of alumina, which can be procured at a cheap and a moderate rate, by mixing equal quantities of sulphate of alum (common alum) and acetate of lead (sugar of lead), and dissolving them in water: one pound of each may be purchased for one shilling, which may be dissolved in one gallon and a half of boiling water, and well mixed; when cold, the supernatant liquid should be removed from the sediment, which consists of sulphates of lead, potash, &c. Any article of dress, no matter how slight the fabric, if well saturated in it, and allowed to dry slowly, will bear the action of boiling water, and not permit it to pass through: it is a remarkable fact, and there are many others connected with the same solution well worthy of investigation. I should be glad if some of your learned correspondents would favour us with the reason why the boiling water will not pass through, and the steam of the water will. Thinking it a subject not totally unworthy of examination, I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

THOMAS IRWIN,
Apothecary and Chemist, 48 Cuffe St.

A SCENE AT SEA.

"I saw the ship go dancing on before the favouring gale,
And like the pinions of a swan was spread each swelling sail;
But ere again uprose the sun, rose many a shriek and wail;
Ere morn the gallant ship was gone—vanished the snowy sail!"

The ship rode far upon the silent main; 'twas night,
A beautiful, still night; no moon was there,
But the bright stars were hanging overhead
In golden clusters; and the breathless sea
Gave them all back; while the tall vessel seemed
A fairy home, suspended 'twixt two heavens.
And there were happy hearts within her then:
That eve they had desecrated the distant shore
Of their own land; and all had gone to rest
In the dear hope that ere another day
Their feet would press again their native soil:
Then the rich merchant dreamed how his gay stores
Would well reward his exile; and the youth
Thought of his loved one, and in fancy touch'd
Already her rose-lips; while the fond sire
Dreamed of his wife and children, and his hearth
With their bright faces gathered round, like stars,
To hearken to the marvels of his voyage.

* * * * *

There is a stillness over sea and heaven—
A placid calm, a holy peace: alas!
Whence is that sudden cry—that rising flame
That bursts from the fair vessel? 'Tis no fire
Of heaven, no angry lightning, that hath struck
And blasted it! A moment, and the scene
That was so fair is changed: the heavens above
And still as ever; but the death-fire glows
Upon the burnished waters! Groans and prayers
Rise up all vainly! There's a sudden shriek,
Like to an earthquake; and the hopes and fears
Of many hearts, the vessel and its freight,
Are vanished—scattered into nameless things,
And all is swallowed up and lost!

—From the *Knickerbocker*.

TRUE CHARITY.—The lowest order of charity is that which is satisfied with relieving the immediate pressure of distress in individual cases. A higher is, that which makes provision on a large scale for the relief of such distress; as when a nation passes on from common almsgiving to a general provision for the destitute. A higher still is, when such provision is made in the way of anticipation, or for distant objects; as when the civilization of savages, the freeing of slaves, the treatment of the insane, or the education of the blind and deaf and mutes, is undertaken. The highest charity of all is, that

which aims at the prevention rather than the alleviation of evil. It is a nobler charity to prevent destitution, crime, and ignorance, than to relieve individuals who never ought to have been made destitute, criminal, and ignorant.

EMPLOYMENT FOR THE UNHAPPY.—The unhappy are indisposed to employment: all active occupations are wearisome and disgusting in prospect, at a time when every thing, life itself, is full of weariness and disgust. Yet the unhappy must be employed, or they will go mad. Comparatively blessed are they, if they are set in families, where claims and duties abound, and cannot be escaped. In the pressure of business there is present safety and ultimate relief. Harder is the lot of those who have few necessary occupations, enforced by other claims than their own harmlessness and profitableness. Reading often fails. Now and then it may beguile; but much oftener the attention is languid, the thoughts wander, and associations with the subject of grief are awakened. Women who find that reading will not do, will obtain no relief from sewing. Sewing is pleasant enough in moderation to those whose minds are at ease the while; but it is an employment which is trying to the nerves when long continued, at the best; and nothing can be worse for the harassed, and for those who want to escape from themselves. Writing is bad. The pen hangs idly suspended over the paper, or the sad thoughts that are alive within write themselves down. The safest and best of all occupations for such sufferers as are fit for it, is intercourse with young children. An infant might have beguiled Satan and his peers the day after they were couched on the lake of fire, if the love of children had chanced to linger amidst the ruins of their angelic nature. Next to this comes honest, genuine acquaintanceship among the poor; not mere charity-visiting, grounded on soup-tickets and blankets, but intercourse of mind, with real mutual interest between the parties. Gardening is excellent, because it unites bodily exertion with a sufficient engagement of the faculties, while sweet, compassionate nature is ministering cure in every sprouting leaf and scented blossom, and beckoning sleep to draw nigh, and be ready to follow up her benignant work. Walking is good, not stepping from shop to shop, or from neighbour to neighbour, but stretching out far into the country, to the freshest fields, and the highest ridges, and the quietest lanes. However sullen the imagination may have been among its griefs at home, here it cheers up and smiles. However listless the limbs may have been when sustaining a too heavy heart, here they are braced, and the lagging gait becomes buoyant again. However perverse the memory may have been in presenting all that was agonizing, and insisting only on what cannot be retrieved, here it is first disregarded, and then it sleeps; and the sleep of the memory is the day in Paradise to the unhappy. The mere breathing of the cool wind on the face in the commonest highway is rest and comfort which must be felt at such times to be believed. It is disbelieved in the shortest intervals between the seasons of enjoyment; and every time the sufferer has resolution to go forth to meet it, it penetrates to the very heart in glad surprise. The fields are better still: for there is the lark to fill up the hours with mirthful music; or, at worst, the robin and the flocks of fieldfares, to show that the hardest day has its life and hilarity. But the calmest region is the upland, where human life is spread out beneath the bodily eye, where the mind rises from the peasant's nest to the spire town, from the schoolhouse to the churchyard, from the diminished team in the patch of fallow, or the fisherman's boat in the cove, to the viaduct that spans the valley, or the fleet that glides ghostlike on the horizon. This is the perch where the spirit plumes its ruffled and drooping wings, and makes ready to let itself down any wind that heaven may send.—From *Deerbrook, a Tale*, by Harriet Martineau.

CHILDHOOD.—Childhood is like a mirror, catching and reflecting images from all around it. Remember that an impious or profane thought, uttered by a parent's lips, may operate on the young heart like a careless spray of water thrown upon polished steel, staining it with rust which no after scouring can efface.

Printed and published every Saturday by GUNN and CAMERON, at the Office of the General Advertiser, No. 6, Church Lane, College Green, Dublin.—Agents:—R. GROOMBRIDGE, Panyer Alley, Paternoster Row, London; SIMMS and DINHAM, Exchange Street, Manchester; C. DAVES, North John Street, Liverpool; J. DRAKE, Birmingham; SLOCOMBE & SIMMS, Leeds; FRAZER and CRAWFORD, George Street, Edinburgh; and DAVID ROBERTSON, Trongate, Glasgow.